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Songs *of*  
Yosemite

Harold Symmes

Yosemite valley - Poetry  
Poetry, American

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# Songs *of* Yosemite

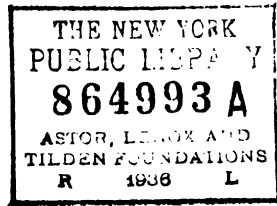
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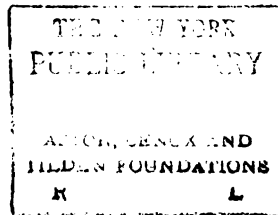
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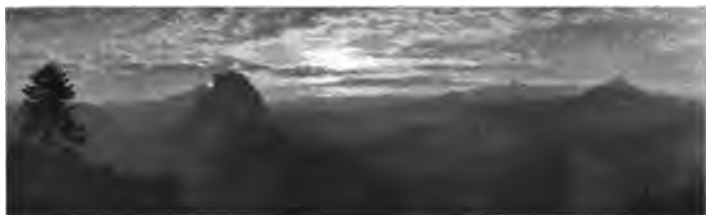
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# Songs *of* Yosemite





**DAWN FROM GLACIER POINT**

## Love, It Is Day

### DAWN FROM GLACIER POINT

A dreaming glow that deepens fold on fold,  
A riven mountain head against that glow,  
A trembling halo, flash of arrowed gold,—  
And day hath dawned in one refulgent flow.

A glow that doth a dreaming heart incite,  
A flush of virgin wonder, a trembling ray  
Of consciousness that some great living light  
Out-treads the night and brings love's day.

# A Master Calls

## THE MERCED RIVER

From the proud granite crests of the world,  
Where winter's drift silver is furled,  
    The sun grants me being,  
    My frozen soul freeing,—  
A water-sprite valleyward hurled.

And straightway I gather new might,  
As I race in tempestuous flight,  
    Ceaselessly pouring  
    A thunderous roaring  
That echoes through day and through night;

Now over the glacier-carved walls,  
From heights that my wild soul enthralls,  
    In midair outleaping,  
    With cloud mists outsweeping,  
And rainbows that halo my falls.

The lush mountain meadows I lave,  
Their emerald with crystal I pave,  
    As laughingly swirling  
    I'm fretting and purling  
Their marge with my white-lapping wave.

On, on through a granite-walled gorge,  
In anger its boulders I scourge,  
    Now grinding and churning  
    Its bed at my turning,  
I lash and I leap and I surge.



What spirit impetuous fills  
My wild being? What god ever wills  
    This crashing and bounding,  
    This endless resounding,  
That rings through the great granite hills?

Ever down to an unknown home,  
From heavens unknown I come.  
    Ah, why this mad seething,  
    Eternally wreathing  
These flowers of silvery foam?

Why I go, what I am or shall be?  
For a river there's naught but the sea.  
    Some master is calling,  
    And I, ever falling,  
Know only my soul would be free.

## Cloud Mist

### YOSEMITE FALLS

A burst of molten silver, born  
Of mountain snow,  
That bears the beauty of the morn  
Within its flow.

A wave of streaming white that falls,  
And, falling, flings  
Against the gray old granite walls  
Its silver wings.

A whitened fire from out the sky,  
Whose arrowed strands  
In sunlight gleam and flash and die,  
Like earth-hurled brands.



**YOSEMITE FALLS**

A rush, as surges of the sea,  
That, dashing, wakes  
Dull echoes of a musketry  
Where'er it breaks.

A river turned to cloud mist, blown  
By every breath,  
Yet coming to its crystal own,  
After death.

## Trail Song

Then it's ho! for the pack  
On the dusty track  
And ho! for the roadside rills.  
A song for the trail  
Through gorge and swale,  
That leads to the giant hills.

Up! Storm the heights  
Where first dawn lights  
And vales where nothing stills  
The thundering call  
Of stream and fall  
In the heart of the giant hills.

Breathe deep their air  
So clear and rare,  
Breathe deep the joy that thrills.  
Though muscles ache,  
No steep forsake,—  
There's strength in the giant hills.

And oh! the rest  
On the mountain's crest  
When night the day fulfills,  
Beneath a pine,  
Where great stars shine,  
Asleep in the giant hills.

Then up and sing  
Till rock-walls ring  
And echo heaven fills!  
A wild heigh-ho  
To the vale below!  
Life sings in the giant hills!



**MIRROR LAKE**

## Shadowed Splendor

### MIRROR LAKE

A reach of shadowed splendor in the silence  
of the dawn,  
Of purity transcendent,  
Holding earth and heaven pendent  
Within a mystic mirror as breathless as the  
morn.

Vision of mountain beauty, deep-shadowed,  
motionless,  
A jewel in granite setting,  
A soul in dream forgetting  
Its power of enchantment, its depths of love-  
liness;



Spirit of sleeping waters, how like man's soul  
thou art!  
Touched of earth about thee,  
Colored of life without thee,  
Yet holding this gleam of heaven within thine  
inner heart.

## When Lover Seals With Lover

### THE HAPPY ISLES

Oh, the Happy Isles, happy sylvan isles!

There through leafage streaming,

Sungold fancies gleaming

Mingle with the dreaming

Of deep, soft shadowed beauty, on the Happy  
Isles.

Oh, the mountain music of the Happy Isles!

There cool winds are singing,

Feathered song up-winging

And crystal waters flinging

Their diamond dancing laughter about the  
Happy Isles.

Oh love, a music calls us on toward life's

Happy Isles.

The world shall yield new treasure

Of beauty and of pleasure,—

A life in fullest measure,—

When lover seals with lover upon the Happy

Isles.

# A King Thou Art

EL CAPITAN

A king thou art with all a king's nobility,  
Erect in sovereign form of kingly majesty;  
Fearless, serene and proud, a mighty testament  
Of bodied force, of naked strength magnificent,—  
The strength of matchless form, of smooth  
clean-muscled stone,  
From base to stately crest builded of mighty  
bone;  
The strength of towering grace fine balanced,  
all controlled,



**EL CAPITAN**

As when strong master men in leash their pas-  
sions hold;

A strength deep-based, secure, of stern and  
deathless lease,

The perfect strength that gives of beauty and  
of peace.

Worn by man's sordid life of selfishness and  
wrong,

I bring, O King, my grief, and in thy strength  
am strong.

## Gods *of* the Hills

O god of the great granite hills,  
Out-aging time's æons in length,  
Thy grandeur and majesty fills  
The world with a sense of thy  
strength.

O sprite of the sun-laughing stream,  
A-dance in an endless cascade,  
Thy life doth but last as a gleam,  
A ripple, a song, and then fade.

O soul of the murmurous pines,  
Thou breath'st, from a thousand heart  
strings,  
A song without words that enshrines  
The dream of ethereal things.

O nymph of the spirit-white fall,  
By wind-love and sun-love soft kissed,  
Out-wave in its cloud beauty all  
Thy tresses of argentine mist.

O gods of this wonderful vale,  
My brothers in stream, cliff and tree,  
Thy communion shall ever prevail  
To exalt and to deify me.



## Sierran Meadows

The Scots may vaunt their highland,  
The English praise the lea,  
But a green Sierran meadow  
Surpasses all for me.

A lake of emerald grasses,  
Wind-winnowed 'neath the blue,  
Lush and deep and fragrant,  
With snow springs purling through;

Flecked with nodding flowers,  
Hyacinth and golden rod,  
Lily and evening primrose—  
A garden for a god.

And all about, snow summits  
My flowering mead enshrine,  
While nearer stand battalions  
Of solemn, tapering pine.

Aye, vaunt your heathery highland  
Or praise the velvet lea,  
But oh, this mountain meadow  
Surpasses all for me!



**NEVADA FALLS**

# Wild Waters

## NEVADA FALLS

Like outburst volcanic  
Of forces titanic  
She flings her white storm flood far forth on  
the air;  
A body stupendous,  
Some wild thing tremendous,  
That leaps like a beast from its high mountain  
lair.

In white anger breaking,  
Her drenched mane outshaking,  
She roars as she pours down a thunder cloud  
doom;  
A furious leaping,  
Her flanks ever steeping  
With froth of her spray drift, enfanged with  
her spume.

**Beneath, a wild boiling,  
Blind surging and roiling,  
Mad glory of power, mad glory of might;  
Wild frenzy of forces  
Fresh burst from their sources,  
White blood of the mountains in unbridled  
flight.**

## In Gray-Souled Mystery

### HALF DOME

It rises heavy-shouldered 'gainst the dawn,  
A cloven mount, dark robed in dusks of  
    night;  
Still bowed and brooding, as if undrawn  
As yet was sleep before the wak'ning light:  
    A shadowed dome of majesty,  
    Deep-cloaked in dreams of mystery.

It wakes and seems to raise its riven head  
Erect against the deep Sierran blue;  
And for a moment now, with shadows spread,  
It halts the very sun, as if it would undo  
    The day for lake and stream and tree,  
And fold them all in mystery.

All day it crouches sphinx-like, lion shaped,  
Gray hued and bare beneath the sun, alone;  
Within its heart forever unescaped  
Sealing the secret of the living stone;  
Its birth, its life, its destiny  
Tombed in a gray-souled mystery.

Again it dreams against the eastern stars,  
An awful giant shadow upward massed,  
Grim stone enigma that no thought unbars,  
Inscrutable, unconquerable and vast,  
Divine in dark supremacy  
Of unfathomable mystery.

# Titans of Earth

## SIERRAN SUMMITS

Peak upon peak uptowering, these mountain  
giants rise,

Piercing with their summits the far cerulean  
skies,—

Mighty shouldered Titans relentlessly up-  
hurled

In the grinding pack and pressure that, bat-  
tling, builds the world.

With slow corroding fingers Time wears their  
bastions low,

Wreathing the gaping gashes with garlands  
of her snow.



Carved by ice-toothed glaciers, ensculptured  
and embossed,  
Split by fang of lightning, by thunder wracked  
and tossed,  
Shattered, scarred and broken, left desolate  
alone,  
Each sovereign crest majestic upon its granite  
throne,—  
They bear eternal battle in the war that gave  
them birth,  
Born of earth in body, to rise above that  
earth,  
Fated to a conflict that crushes all; and yet,—  
Behold their grim proud faces toward heaven  
ever set!

# The Bride of the Silver Mist

## BRIDAL VEIL FALLS

Virgin of bridal beauty,  
Veiled in a bridal mist,  
Wrapped in diaphanous mantle,  
By sunlight arched and kissed,  
Art thou sent down from heaven  
To hold a holy tryst?

Airy, silver spirit,  
The soul of a summer cloud,  
Thou breath'st of birth celestial  
In thy waving, filmy shroud  
That sways like a silken vesture,  
With grace and life endowed.



**BRIDAL VEIL**

But why, O bridal virgin,  
Is thy beauty thus out-rolled,  
Spreading thy silver treasure  
In endless fold on fold?  
Is there some spirit bridegroom  
Worthy thy heart to hold?

“Down in the sylvan valley  
My lover waits for me,  
A river, strong, deep-hearted,  
Of crystalline purity,  
With soul that shall forever  
Hold mine in fealty.”

## Spirit Heights

### THE VALLEY WALLS BY MOONLIGHT

Too great, too grand in fearful majesty,  
These valley walls that shut the heavens out.  
They crush with heartless over-strength and  
flout

The pettiness of man's mortality;  
Immense, colossal, vast,  
Rude mountain strength upmassed.  
Within their scarred and furrowed front is  
writ

That life of brutal strength which knows no  
law

Beyond a greater force,—Time's storms that  
split

The heart of stone, or ledge and crevice  
gnaw—

A tale of heartless strife,  
This world's material life.

So before the all-revealing light of day  
They stand. But now day fades, with failing  
breath

Day dies; and night shrouds all with glooms  
of death,

Blots out these signs of strife in death's kind  
way,

And final word now says  
In awful silences.

But lo, a flood of silver lucence creeps

A-down the night and bodies forth in light,  
From source unseen, these self-same valley  
steeps;  
Transmutes each granite cliff to marble  
height,  
And purges with its kiss  
Each grim stained precipice.

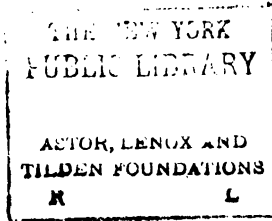
The same in massive shape and mighty line  
And towering form of splendent majesty  
They stand, yet veiled in tides of mystery—  
Pale tides that bathe in their ethereal wine  
Each starry-arrased edge,  
Each pine-enshadowed ledge.  
Great spirit masses now they gently fade,  
Form on form. With all God's world in tune

They rest, softened, silvered, overlaid  
With vestal raiments of the virgin moon;  
Drenched in a silence white  
And pure as their own light.

O life divine! O soul of the finer soul!  
What if, at last, when night's great shadow  
falls,  
Thou shouldst stand forth like yonder spirit  
walls,  
The truth of spirit shining through the cor-  
poral whole,  
In every line and shelf  
Thyself and not thyself;  
The worn stained vesture of this world,  
unseen



In the truer light that, from some distant  
sphere,  
Shall bare the soul from all its flesh terrene,  
And let, at last, in light divine appear  
The deathless personality,—  
Thyself, thy soul now free  
In simple spirit majesty.









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